

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 DHA-05  
MCT-01 /079 W  
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R 120525Z SEP 77  
FM AMCONSUL MILAN  
TO AMEMBASSY ROME  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5590  
AMEMBASSY VIENNA  
SETAF

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 MILAN 1451

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, IT  
SUBJECT: WHAT'S NEW IN BOLZANO

REF 76 MILAN 2723

SUMMARY - RELENTLESS GERMAN MAJORITY PRESSURE FOR  
EXPANDED POWER IN PROVINCE OF BOLZANO IS BUILDING UP  
ITALIAN MINORITY REACTION THAT RISKS SIGNIFICANT PCI  
ELECTORAL GAINS IN NOVEMBER 1978 REGIONAL ELECTIONS.  
END SUMMARY.

1. IT'S NO NEWS THAT ECONOMY OF BOLZANO IS IN EXCELLENT  
SHAPE AND PROSPEROUS BY ANY MEASURE AND ACCORDING TO  
ALL OF OUR LOCAL CONTACTS. SECOND QUARTER WAS GREAT  
WITH EMPLOYMENT UP ALMOST ONE POINT AND INVESTMENT  
INCREASING. IN ENTIRE PROVINCE ONLY 600 YOUNG PEOPLE  
HAVE CLAIMED TO BE UNEMPLOYED AND SKILLED LABOR  
SIMPLY NOT TO BE HAD. TOURIST SEASON DESCRIBED AS  
BEST EVER.

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2. IT'S NO NEWS THAT BOLZANO IS FREE OF CRIME AND  
TERRORISM THAT PLAGUE MAJOR ITALIAN CITIES LIKE  
MILAN.

3. IT'S NO NEWS THAT THE GERMAN LANGUAGE MAJORITY  
AND THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE MINORITY HAVE SERIOUS  
DIFFERENCES AND THAT RELATIONS ARE STRAINED. (SEE REFTTEL)

4. IT IS NEWS THAT THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO COMMUNITIES IS BECOMING MORE ACUTE AND THAT THE PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARY MAY WELL BE THE PCI.

5. THOSE ARE THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM A SERIES OF CONGEN MEETINGS IN BOLZANO SEPTEMBER 7 WITH ITALIAN AND GERMAN LANGUAGE LEADERS.

6. GERMAN MAJORITY DOMINATED BY SUD TIROLER VOLKSPARTEI (SVP), A CATHOLIC PARTY NOW LEAD BY BOLZANO PROVINCIAL PRESIDENT SILVIUS MAGNAGO - ONE LEGGED FORMER GERMAN ARMY OFFICER NOW 63 YEARS OLD. IN PROVINCE, GERMANS ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT 2/3 OF POPULATION WHILE ITALIANS ARE ABOUT 3/4 IN CITY OF BOLZANO.

SVP HAS ALMOST 60 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE PROVINCE COMPARED TO 13 PERCENT FOR THE DC AND 9 PERCENT FOR THE PCI. IN THE CITY, THE SVP HAS 21 PERCENT, THE DC 25 PERCENT AND THE PCI 22 PERCENT.

7. THE PROBLEM NOW BUILDING ARISES FROM THE LATEST STEPS TO PUT INTO EFFECT THE FAMOUS 1969 "PACCHETTO" OF CHANGES TO GIVE THE GERMAN MAJORITY ITS SHARE OF PUBLIC JOBS AND TO ASSURE BILINGUALITY OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES. ACCORDING TO THE AGREEMENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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ALL PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, FROM GRAVE DIGGER TO PROVINCIAL ENGINEER, MUST KNOW BOTH ITALIAN AND GERMAN. THE REQUIREMENTS DIFFER BY GRADE BUT RANGE FROM A WORKING VOCABULARY OF 700 WORDS FOR A STREET CLEANER TO 2000 WORDS FOR A SENIOR CIVIL SERVANT - ENOUGH, THE ITALIANS SAY, TO STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL. SINCE THE ITALIAN CIVIL SERVICE NEVER REQUIRED A KNOWLEDGE OF GERMAN AND DURING THE FASCIST PERIOD DISCRIMINATED AGAINST THE GERMAN COMMUNITY, THE BULK OF PUBLIC JOBS ARE HELD BY ITALIAN SPEAKERS - MANY FROM THE SOUTH, AS IS COMMON THROUGHOUT ITALY.

8. THE ISSUE IS NOW COMING TO A HEAD IN THE CITY OF BOLZANO. THIS SUMMER, SUDDENLY, THE GERMAN MAJORITY IN THE PROVINCE INSISTED THAT THE LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT MUST BE MET FOR 170 TEMPORARY CITY EMPLOYEES. THE CITY HAS MET THE EMPLOYMENT QUOTA GUIDELINES BUT A GREAT MANY OF ITS EMPLOYEES DO NOT SPEAK GERMAN AND CANNOT PASS THE LANGUAGE

EXAMINATION. AT THE MOMENT, THE SVP IS TAKING THE POSITION THAT THESE EMPLOYEES MUST BE FIRED. AND ON SEPTEMBER 7 DURING A VISIT TO BOLZANO, BATTLE WAS RAGING IN CITY COUNCIL.

9. PROBLEM ALSO ARISES AS OTHER CITY JOBS BECOME VACANT. MAYOR CITED RETIRING CITY ARCHITECT AND CITY HEALTH OFFICER AS IMMEDIATE CASES. WHERE COULD HE FIND PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED BI-LINGUAL REPLACEMENTS? SO FAR HE COULDN'T. NEITHER COULD HE DO SO FOR ANAESTHETISTS AT CITY HOSPITAL. NOR REPLACE GRAVE DIGGERS AND STREET CLEANERS. HE WAS FACED WITH CURTAILING PUBLIC SERVICES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 MILAN 1451

10. SVP SECRETARY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PROBLEM WAS TOUGH AND THE TRANSITION TO AGREED LINGUISTIC STAFFING WOULD BE DIFFICULT. BUT IT HAD TO GO FORWARD. HE HAD HAD TO INSIST ON CLOSING A COMMUNITY SWIMMING POOL BECAUSE THE ATTENDANT WAS NOT BILINGUAL AND THAT WAS DISAGREEABLE. MOREOVER, ABOUT 2/3 OF THE HOLDERS OF PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS WOULD HAVE TO GIVEN THEM UP TO THE GERMAN COMMUNITY AND YOUNG ITALIANS WOULD HAVE TO LOOK FOR JOBS OUTSIDE OF THE PROVINCE OF BOLZANO. WHILE THAT WOULD BE PAINFUL, THE ITALIANS WOULD ADJUST TO IT AND BE GLAD OF THE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF THE PROVINCE IN THE LONG RUN, IN HIS VIEW.

11. WHEN THE ISSUE WAS PUT TO MAGNANO, HE BRUSHED IT ASIDED. THERE WAS AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT THAT HAD TO BE RESPECTED. HE INTENDED THAT IT SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND WAS NOT GOING TO DELAY, POSTPONE OR WATER IT DOWN. THE GERMAN MAJORITY HAD SUFFERED AT FASCIST HANDS AND HAD WAITED LONG ENOUGH FOR CORRECTION OF ABUSES.THE AGREEMENTS  
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HAD TO BE RESPECTED, OR ELSE. HE CERTAINLY DID NOT WANT TO HURT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY. BUT IF HE HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN IT AND ACHIEVING ETHNIC BALANCE, OBVIOUSLY THE GERMAN ETHNIC MAJORITY HAD TO COME FIRST.

12. THIS CONFLICT IS SEEN BY THE PREFECT, A RARE GERMAN SPEAKING OFFICIAL FROM TRENTO WHO IS PRAISED BY BOTH GERMANS AND ITALIANS, AS PROMISING A MAJOR ELECTORAL SET-BACK FOR THE DC AND FURTHER PROGRESS FOR THE PCI. THE MAYOR OF BOLZANO, ANIMPRESSIVE YOUNG DC, IS MOST ALARMED ABOUT THE DANGER. BUT SO IS THE GERMAN LANGUAGE HEAD OF THE INDUSTRIALISTS ORGANIZATION, A WEALTHY, POWERFUL, US GRADUATE SCHOOL EDUCATED BUSINESSMAN. AND SO IS THE KNOWLEDGEABLE EDITOR OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE DAILY.

13. THEIR REASONING IS THAT THE DC HAS THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR HAVING NEGOTIATED THE SETTLEMENT WITH THE GERMAN POPULATION THAT BROUGHT PEACE AND RECONCILIATION TO THE ALTO ADIGE. THAT IS TO ITS GREAT CREDIT AND NO ONE DISPUTES THE WISDOM AND JUSTICE OF ASSURING GERMAN OCCUPANCY OF PUBLIC JOBS. HOWEVER, THE SVP IS SO POWERFUL THATIT HAS A VIRTUAL POLITICAL MONOPOLY IN THE PROVINCE AND IT IS RUTHLESSLY AND RELENTLESSLY FORCING THE EXECUTION OF THE AGREEMENTS AT ANY COST. PREVIOUSLY, THE SACRIFICES WERE BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN TERMS OF GRANTING GREATER LOCAL AUTONOMY AND FUNDS. THAT DIDN'T HURT ANYOJE LOCALLY. BUT WHEN JOBS ARE TO BE LOST AND POSITIONS ARE TO BE DENIED TO THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY, THE PAIN BECOMES INTENSELY LOCAL AND POLITICAL. SIMILARLY, GERMAN REFUSAL TO  
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FINANCE PUBLIC HOUSING FOR ITALIANS IN THE CITY WHILE BUILDING PUBLIC HOUSING FOR THE GERMANS IN

THE RURAL AREA, IS A VERY SORE POINT AS ARE OTHERS  
OF A SIMILAR NATURE.

14. AS THESE PROBLEMS SURFACE AND GERNERATE ANXIETY  
AND ANGER IN THE ITALIAN COMUNITY, THE DC IS  
BLAMED. IT IS SAID TO BE TOO SOFT, TO HAVE SOLD  
OUT TO THE SVP, TO PUT CATHOLIC UNITY ABOVE ITALIAN  
INTERESTS, TO PUT CAPITALISM ABOVE WOKER NEEDS  
AND TO BE INCOMPETENT. ANGRY ITALIANS OBVIOUSLY  
WON'T VOTE FOR THE SVP IN PROTEST. NOR ARE THE  
MINOR LAY PARTIES OF ANY SIGNFICIANCE IN THE ALTO  
ADIGE. THAT LEAVES THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS.  
THE SOCIALISTS HAVE LITTLE CREDIT, PARTLY BECAUSE  
OF THEIR NATIONAL FAILURES, AND FEW EXPECT THME TO  
CAPAITALIZE ON THE ITALIAN PROTEST VOTE.

15.THE COMMUNISTS ARE A DIFFERENT STORY. UNLIKE  
THE DC, THE PCI HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO BE A BILINGUAL  
PARTY AND HAS DOGGEDLY BUILT A GERMAN BASED PARTY  
IN THE PROVINCE. AND IT HAS HAD NOTABLE SUCCESS.  
IN JUNE 1977, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, IT GOT  
VOTES IN EVERY SINGLE COMMUNE - AREAS THAT ARE  
TOTALLY GERMAN SPEAKIN. IT HAS BECOME THE SECOND  
LARTEST PARTY IN THE CITY OF BOLZANO COULD BECOME THE  
PLURALITY PARTY. ITS PROINCIAL SECRETARY IS A HANDSOME,  
ABLE MAN IN HIS MID-THIRTIES WITH AN EXCELLENT  
LOCAL REPUTATION. HE INSISTS THAT THE ETHNIC  
AGREEMENTS MUST BE CARRIED OUT FAITHFULLY AND  
QUICKLY. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THIS CANNOT  
BE ALLOWED TO CRIPPLED PUBLIC SERVICES. THE PACE  
MUST BE MATCHED TO THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED  
PERSONNEL AND THE SCHOOLS MUST BE FORCED TO UP-  
GRADE LANGUAGE TEACHING TO TURN OUT GENUINELY  
BILINGUAL GRADUATES. THE FAILURE TO HVE DONE SO  
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ALREADY, HE ARGUED, WAS THE FAULT OF THE CHRISTIAN  
DEMOCRATS. THE PCI WANTS TO DEAL WITH THE REAL  
PROBLEM OF BOTH COMMUNITIES, HE SAID, RATHER THAN  
LETTING THE LANGUAGE ISSUE OVERWHELM ALL ELSE.  
THE SVP, HE CAIMED, STRESSED THE LINGUISTIC ISSUE  
AS A MEANS TO MAINTAIN ITS HOLD ON THE GERMAN  
COMMUNITY. IF THERE WERE A REAL DEBATE ON ISSUES,  
THE SVP WOULD LOSE OUT SINCE ITS ONLY UNIFYING  
FORCE IS EXPLOITATION OF THE ETHNIC THEME. HE WAS  
CONFIDENT THAT SVP WAS LOSING GROUND PRECISELY  
FOR THIS REASN AND EXPECTED A STEADY INCREASE OF  
PCI SUPPORT AMONG THE GERMAN ETHNIC COMMUNITY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 MILAN 1451

17. WHILE THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN INCIPIENT FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND WE NOTED AN UPSWING IN OUR DECEMBER 1976 REPORT (76 MILAN 2723), IT IS ONLY THIS SUMMER THAT IT HAS BEGUN TO BITE. AT THIS JUNCTURE, IT IS TOO SOON TO KNOW WHETHER THE SVP WILL RELENT AND COMPROMISE. IT WILL CERTAINLY BE UNDER PRESSURE FROM ITS CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTNERS TO DO SO. AND IT WILL BE UNDER SIMILAR PRESSURE FROM THE GERMAN LANGUAGE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY. BUT THE POWER OF THE SVP LIES IN ITS RURAL VOTES, NOT IN INDUSTRY. AND THE PATRONAGE AND REAL POWER NOW EXERCISED BY THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT WHICH THE SVP CONTROLS IS LIKE THAT OF MOST STATES EXCEPT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS. SO, MAINTAINING THE GERMAN ETHNIC BLOC INTACT IS OF TREMENDOUS VALUE TO THE SVP LEADERSHIP. AND SINCE THE MOST POWERFUL COHESIVE ISSUE IS THE ETHNIC ONE, IT IS UNLIKELY THE MAGNAGO OR HIS COLLEAGUES WILL SOFT PEDAL IT EVEN IF THE VICTIM IS THE DC AND THE MAJOR BENEFICIARY THE PCI. WHEN THAT CHOICE WAS PUT TO MAGNAGO ON SEPTEMBER 7, HE  
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REPEATED HIS THEME THAT INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

HAD TO BE RESPECTED, SCOFFED AT POSSIBLE COMMUNIST  
BENEFITS AND REAFFIRMED HIS DETERMINATION THAT THE  
ETHNIC AGREEMENTS WOULD BE CARRIED OUT AS THEY  
STOOD. PERIOD.

18. THAT'S WHAT'S NEW IN BOLZANO.FINA

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PFOR, PINT, IT  
**To:** ROME  
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